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MATT BLUNT
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May 10, 2006

Mr. W. Douglas Buttrey
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Buttrey:

Union Pacific's request to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) under docket #FC34672 has come to my attention. I have several concerns relating to this request. In a recent visit to Sikeston I toured the area of the tracks that cross over Highway 60 and go through the city of Sikeston. The residents of Sikeston have every reason to be concerned about the proposed influx of new train traffic that would come through their community. Significantly increased rail traffic traveling at high rates of speed presents a safety risk to motorists on Highway 60 and the City of Sikeston. This increased rail traffic through Sikeston, one of the population centers of southeast Missouri, would separate healthcare and first responders from a school, a nursing home and other locations during the time the trains were passing through the city.

I am also very concerned about the safety of motorists on Highway 60 and the interruption to traffic. Union Pacific's request would significantly increase the rail traffic that crosses Highway 60, which is the main east-west highway in southern Missouri. Currently, there is not a grade separation to ease the danger to motorists and obstruction to traffic that would exist if Union Pacific's request was approved. The construction of a grade separation project would take at least one and a half to two years.

A modern and safe transportation infrastructure is important for our state and nation to compete in the global economy. It is important to me that we balance Union Pacific's desire to expand with the safety of the people of Sikeston, southeast Missouri and travelers on Highway 60. During the STB's environmental review, I ask you to carefully consider the consequences of the Union Pacific request and look again at the alternative of expanding along the northern track between Rockview and Dexter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Blunt", written over a horizontal line.

Matt Blunt